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# AFGHANISTAN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION PROJECT II (AAEP II)

OCTOBER 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2017

\$20 MILLION, OFF-BUDGET

## OVERVIEW

AAEP II built the capacity of Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) in 27 provinces and 193 districts to deliver effective and sustainable extension services to Afghan farmers. The project's objectives were to (i) improve rural household food security, (ii) enhance agriculture-based income generation, (iii) improve nutritional status of rural households, and (iv) enhance support for women in the agricultural sector. Activities were implemented through close partnerships with MAIL, provincial and district offices, local researchers and university faculty, farmers, and suppliers.

AAEP II facilitated workgroups composed of farmers and extension workers to identify farming problems and training needs. It addressed these needs through (i) training of trainers for extension workers, (ii) conducting research and finding solutions through the use of model farms, and (iii) on-farm

demonstrations and farmer training to deliver key messages and promote adoption of improved practices to produce higher value and more nutritious crops.

## ACTIVITIES

- Strengthened MAIL/DAIL (District Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Offices) capacity to assess farmers' needs, identify interventions, and design and prioritize training
- Provided agricultural research training for extension workers
- Provided mentoring, coaching, and field practicums to female professionals working for MAIL and DAILs and for female university students
- Coached thematic workgroups and training of trainers
- Organized Farmer Field Schools (FFS) that use local expertise to train other farmers on improved agricultural practices
- Facilitated on-farm demonstrations on subjects such as livestock health, production of grain and vegetables, and on-farm water management.
- Supported a grants program that equips the extension program to solve specific farmers' production problems in targeted regions.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- AAEP II supported 837 extension professionals to conduct 4,660 on-farm training sessions, reaching 5,470 women and 15,737 men. This doubled the number of extension workers engaging farmers and more than doubled the number of farmers being reached by extension workers.
- On-farm demonstrations managed by 3,921 farmers (1,631 women/1,658 men) promoted improved agricultural practices, resulting in 3,370 farmers applying new technologies and management practices.
- AAEP II helped extension agents to form 54 professional workgroups organized by thematic topics, such as Cereals, Industrial and Spice Crops, Vegetables, Orchard Crops, Fruits and Livestock. These workgroups managed 43 Mini-Fund projects, which develop sites or facilities to train trainers and meet basic infrastructure needs to improve agricultural and/or livestock systems.
- Improved extension agents' capabilities through 1,307 training of trainers to assist farmers to grow crops that increased farm revenues 60 percent
- Enhanced female farmers' skills in livestock health and production to improve household nutrition
- Demonstrated a 22 percent reduction in grain losses using hermetically sealed grain storage bags, a savings of \$9 – \$19 per household, depending upon the crop
- Established a women's silk worm association in Badakhshan and provided training on production and processing for 140 women across three provinces, resulting in a \$64 income per member from sale of silk.
- Introduced planting wheat in rows in four provinces, resulting in an average 33 percent increase in yield over traditional methods
- Carried out innovative research in collaboration with a university professor, which resulted in 32 to 65 percent increase in maize harvest, depending on the variety, through conservation agricultural practices

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